

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

proved once again that, with a strong central government in Teheran, autonomist or separatist movements in Iran could thrive only so long as they obtained foreign assistance.

Why was it that the Soviet government decided finally to evacuate its troops and to abandon its willing puppet, Kuchik Khan? One

reply may be that it did so because it no longer needed to fear the British troops, which by that time had been withdrawn. But that

reply does not explain everything, especially since British detach-

ments had already left Iran before the renewed Soviet landings at

Enzeli in July. A better explanation seems to be that the withdrawal

of Soviet troops was the ultimate test of the sincerity of the Soviet-

Iranian Treaty. If the treaty was conceived mainly as a propaganda

instrument for the Bolsheviks—and we know that this was so, be-

cause of the wide distribution of the text all over the Orient by

Soviet agents—then it was wiser not to provoke an open breach with

Iran. After the withdrawal of British troops Iran was in a position to

claim that she was now the victim of the new Soviet imperialism.

Russia had to choose between two methods: either the cultivation of

good relations with the central government and the gradual infiltration

of Iran with Communist propaganda through the Soviet Em-

bassy in Teheran or highhanded direct action aiming at the

sovietization and detachment of several Iranian provinces in con-

nivance with discontented elements of Iran. By the autumn of 1931

Moscow apparently came to the conclusion that the first method

would better suit its purposes. Accordingly the Red Army left, but the

Red Ambassador, Rothstein, remained. Besides, even the adoption

of an outwardly correct line toward the government  
of Iran did not  
necessarily mean the complete abandonment of  
attempts to gain  
control of Iran's northern border areas. But this  
enterprise need not  
be undertaken in such a conspicuously direct way as  
it had been in  
Gilan.

#### AZERBAIJAN SEPARATISM AND THE KHORASAN EPISODE

Events in the Iranian province of Azerbaijan and in  
Khorasan were  
very instructive on Soviet tactics toward an Eastern  
country with  
which, on the surface, correct if not cordial relations  
existed. Early in

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